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THE OBSERVATOR.

A Continuation of the Remarks on Occasional Conformity.

From Saturday December the 11th, to Wednesday December the 15th, 1703.

Country-m. MAfter Obſervator, I have been thinking of what you ſaid ever ſince we laſt parted; and it ſeems conſiſtent with common Reaſon, that the People can never loſe thoſe Rights and Priviledges that they were Born to; and if ſuch a Clauſe ſhould be added to the Occaſional Conformity Bill, which thoſe Men I told you of deſired ſhould Paſs, I do not ſee how any Man in England, let him be of what Opinion he will, can preſerve his Native Right.

Obſ. Honeſt Country-man, you are much in the Right on't; and I don't ſee but in time, at that rate, we may loſe even our Conſtitution, which is Parliaments: For the ſame Power that takes away the Voting and Electing Right of One part of the Commons of England, may take away the Right from the Other part, and then we have indeed a Parliament; but as theſe Members Dye off, there is none to be Elected in the room of the Deceaſed, and ſo in 60 years time, 'tis ten to One, if the whole Houſe of Commons be not Extinct; and then farewell Conſtitution, and welcome Arbitrary Power, Popery, and the Devil and all his Works.

Country-m. I told you, Sir, that thoſe People were Papiſts and Jacobites, and look'd further than the preſent Conſequences of that Bill: But, Sir, do you think the High Churchmen, as they call them, are the only Perſons fit for Publick Employments? Are they Honeſter than other People? Are not the Low, or Moderate Churchmen and Diſſenters an equal ſupport to the Government; as good Friends to the Queen; and as fit to be Truſted with Publick Management?

Obſ. Thoſe People that cry up their own Endowments, Capacity, and Honeſty, are the moſt to be miſtruſted; Men of Modeſty and Judgment, ſeldom ſound a Trumpet in their own Praiſe; their own Good Works will praiſe them in the Gate; and their Vertue and Honeſty will Recommend them to Publick Favour, and gain them the Approbation of the Court, and the Common People: But when Men go about to ſecure Publick Employments to themſelves by a Law, it looks as if they wanted real Merit and Worth to Recommend them, which are Eſſential Qualifications for Offices in all Governments, where the Peoples Frenzical Notions do not encline the Ballance to the worſer ſide of Intereſt. I fain wou'd know that Country wherein the moſt Diſhoneſt, Irreligious, and Ignorant Men have the only Right to Offices, becauſe they Conform to ſome certain Points in Religion; and Men of Vertue, Honeſty, and Probity are excluded, becauſe they cannot comply with Terms contrary to the Dictates of their Conſciences. I am not for telling of Noſes, as a late Author would have us, and for Ballancing the Accounts of Knaves betwixt the Diſſenters and the Churchmen; but ſuppoſe our Officers ſhould be Infected with a General Corruption, and the whole Body of Officers ſhould be Tainted, muſt we ſee the Nation ſink beneath the Weight of Publick Frauds, and the Body Politick Languiſh under the Epidemical Diſtempers of Embezelments and Miſapplication of the Publick Treaſure, rather than ſave it by applying the neceſſary Remedies of Occaſional Conformiſt Officers? We can't tell how theſe People may Act, when they have got the Monopoly of Offices; nor how far they may be Tempted to be Diſhoneſt, when they know Honeſter Men are Excluded by a Law, from filling their Vacancies, if they ſhould happen to be Diſcharged.

It has been for the Advantage of the Commonwealth, to have Men of Different Perſwaſions and Opinions Employ'd in Publick Service; becauſe they are Cheks and Spies one upon another, and apt to make Diſcoveries of one anothers Faults; but when they are all of a Party, and of one Opinion, they will not, like my Lord Thommonds Cocks, Quarrel and Fight among themſelves; but they will Unite in the Bands of Intereſt, and ſo Ruin the Kingdom by a Combination of Officers, as that of the Land-Waiters and Kings Waiters at the Cuſtom-Houſe is the Ruin of Trade, and the Deſtruction of the Fair Merchant: And all this done under the plauſible pretence of being Churchmen in the ſtricteſt Senſe; and if they happen to be Convicted and Executed for Heinous Crimes, as was the Captains Wade and Kirby, upon this Score the Parſon of the new Church at Plymouth will admit them into the Church after Death, and Bury them under his Communion-Table.

Country-m. Maſter Obſervator, I ſhall Trouble you no farther in Remarks, on the Learned and Eloquent Sir Humphry: Here's a Book in my Hand, call'd Peace without Union, that very Excellently Expoſes his Scribling Capacity: But pray, Sir, what do you think of the Timing of ſuch a Bill as Sir Humpry Vindicates?

Obſ. We have been a long Time deſirous of a Union with Scotland, which has been thought ſo Neceſſary for the Common Good of theſe Kingdoms, that a Commiſſion has paſs'd, and Proceedings have been in that Affair; now the Scots may have Cauſe of Amuſement in this Point, when they find we cannot agree among our ſelves, and that Hardſhips are intended to be laid on ſuch in England as are of the Religion of Scotland, of which our Queen is under God the Defender and Protector.

The Neceſſity of our Affairs, which may happen in a War of ſuch great Importance to Europe, as is the preſent War, may require the Speedy

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Assistance of all our People, who under Discontents, Interests divided, and Jealousies of Future Hardships, may prove Awkard and Backward in their Assistance in the Common Cause.

Our Allies may think us not so firm a Stake in the Hedge of the Confederacy, when they find a Disunion among our selves; and we cannot wonder if Men alter their Sentiments of the Strength of a Body, when they find its Limbs out of Joynt, and afflicted with Convulsive Motions.

I make no question but our High-Fliers will not give their Assent to the Project of Peace betwixt Sweden and Poland, it being directly founded on Occasional Conformity Principles; One Article of which is, 'That both the Protestant 'Religions, Lutheran and Calvinist, shall not only 'be allowed freedom of Exercise, but shall also have 'all their Churches they formerly Possess'd in 'Poland restored to them, and such as they may 'need, allow'd to them without Opposition, and 'to Enjoy the same Peaceably for ever. Another 'Article is, They shall have Place and Votes in 'all Diets, as the Roman Catholicks, and without 'them nothing shall be Concluded or Done; they 'shall have freedom of Sitting and Voting, and 'the Crowns of Sweden and Prussia will Defend 'and Protect them therein for ever.

Country-m. Master Observator, I'll be Hang'd if our Tories and Jacobites don't call the Kings of Prussia and Sweden, a couple of Whigs and Occasional Conformists.

Obs. I can't tell how far Sir Humphry's Book might have prevail'd with those Monarchs, had it been Translated into the German and Swedish Language, before those two Articles had been Concerted; But certain it is those Monarchs are of Opinion, That Men of different Notions in Religion, may bear Offices under the same Government; and that it is necessary for the Security of the Peace of the Northern Kingdoms: For Men do not care to venture their Lives in Defence of a Kingdom, where they have no Profit or Advantage by the State; and as it is thought the only way to Unite the Northern Crowns against their common Enemy, the Czar of Muscovy; so the want of such a Union in England may give our common Enemy, the French King, the greatest Advantage over us.

The Misfortune the Nation lay under the last Sessions, by the Disputes betwixt the two Houses, in relation to the Occasional Conformity Bill, for ought I know encouraged the Papists in Ireland and Scotland to carry on their Designs with the greater Vigour. And of late we are informed by our Accounts from both those Kingdoms, That the Papists are Arming themselves against the Present Government; and in Ireland they have Committed Outrages, and Murder on the Protestants. I Speak with a deep Sence of the dismal Prospect of Danger from the Papists in those Kingdoms, particularly from those in Ireland, who are so Potent as to Insult the Protestants, so Wealthy as to have a Fund of Money to prevent, on any Occation, such Bills as shall be advanced in order to keep them from doing of Mischief; and this at a Juncture when we are falling out among our selves, and contriving Means to Restrain, if not to Disfranchise Protestants.

The Papists must surely Laugh at our Stupidity, and Bless the Happy Minute of our Dissention, who sit securely under the warm Hedge of a Non-Execution of the Laws made against them, and be pleased to hear the Musick of Protestant Storms roaring over their Heads; when they, contrary to Law, can Cabal and Assemble together in the Cities of London and Westminster, under the Nose of the Court and Parliament, when we are Banishing Protestants from Offices, and engaging one another with the greatest Fury for the Mean and Insignificant Trifles of Profit and Advantage. Now is the time for the Popish Leviathans to sport themselves on the Waves of Popular Rage and Contention; and while we are busie in these Contemptible, yet Pernicious Controversies, they are enabled to finish those Projects they have so long been carrying on for the Ruin of our dear Country.

I wish all the Natives of this Kingdom were Possess'd of that true Spirit of Union, which our Pious and Good Queen has so Sincerely and Heartily recommended to all Her People; that the God of Peace would asswage the Tumults of our Minds, and overcome within us those Headstrong Passions, which hurry us into Confusion, that our Eyes may no longer be distorted with Fury and Rage, but that we may recover our visive faculties, and yet see, in this our Day, what belongs to our Peace; that our Sons of Thunder may for the future appear in the still Voice, and not in Hurricanes and Tempests; that God would put it into the Heart of our Soveraign to appoint a Day of Fasting and Prayer, to be observed by all the Godly Persons of this Kingdom, to implore the Divine Assistance in quieting our Intestine Feuds, and Dispelling popular Clouds. This is full as necessary as on the Account of the late dreadful Hurricane and Tempest: That only shatter'd Houses, destroy'd Ships, and pull'd up Trees by the Roots; but This makes our Commonwealth, and even our Constitution Tremble.

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